

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-46. Canceled

47. (Currently Amended) A breathable gas mask arrangement, comprising:

a mask shell having a portion adapted to receive a supply of pressurized breathable gas and a user side;

a gusset portion having a first side attached to the user side of the shell and having a second side;

a cushion having a first portion constructed and arranged to attach to the second side of the gusset portion and a second portion constructed and arranged to contact a user's face in use and provide a seal between the mask arrangement and the user's face; and

a headgear constructed and arranged to attach the mask shell to the user;

wherein[[,]] the gusset portion is constructed and arranged such that it can expand and contract to alter a distance between the mask shell and the cushion, an interior of the gusset portion being exposed to the supply of pressurized breathable gas and having a projected area on the user's face  $A_g$  which is greater than an area  $A_c$  of contact of the cushion with the user's face such that the supply of pressurized breathable gas acting on the area  $A_g$  provides a component of a contact force  $F_c$  of the cushion on the user's face, and a ratio of  $A_g/A_c$  is greater than 1.00, a change in total force of the mask on the face  $F_m$  being generally directly proportional at a given operating pressure to a displacement of the mask shell toward the user's face from an initial seal position within a range of such mask shell displacement of about 6-25 mm.

48. (Original) A breathable gas mask arrangement as in claim 47, wherein the mask shell displacement is in a range of about 10-20 mm.

49. (Original) A breathable gas mask arrangement as in claim 48, wherein the ratio of  $A_g/A_c$  is in a range of 1.50-4.00.

50. (Original) A breathable gas mask arrangement as in claim 49, wherein the gusset portion includes a single gusset having a flexible sidewall with a generally triangular cross-section when not exposed to the supply of pressurized breathable gas that balloons to a generally rounded cross-section when exposed to the supply of pressurized breathable gas.

51-74. Canceled

75. (Original) A mask assembly attachable to a user for receiving and supplying pressurized air to the user, comprising:

a cushion for contacting a user's face; and

a suspension mechanism axially movably supporting the cushion and exposed to the pressurized air to provide a first axial spring force to the cushion proportional to a pressure of the air, the first axial spring force being at least 30% greater than a second axial spring force on the cushion due to the pressurized air acting directly on the cushion.

76. (Original) A mask assembly as in claim 75, wherein the first axial spring force is between 200% and 400% greater than the second axial spring force.

77. (Original) A mask assembly as in claim 76, wherein the suspension mechanism includes at least one gusset having a flexible sidewall with a generally triangular cross-section when not exposed to the pressurized air that balloons to a generally rounded cross-section when exposed to the pressurized air.

78. (Original) A mask assembly attachable to a user for receiving and supplying pressurized air to the user, comprising:

a mask shell;

a cushion for contacting a user's face and having a first projected area on the user's face;

and

a suspension mechanism attached to the mask shell axially movably supporting the cushion and having a second projected area on the user's face greater than the first projected area on the face by at least 30%.

79. (Original) A mask assembly as in claim 78, wherein the second projected area is between 200% and 400% greater than the first projected area.

80. (Original) A mask assembly as in claim 79, wherein the suspension mechanism includes at least one gusset having a flexible sidewall with a generally triangular cross-section

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when not exposed to the pressurized air that balloons to a generally rounded cross-section when exposed to the pressurized air.

81-124. Canceled